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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/820,688	03/30/2001	Koji Naito	018987-032	8787

7590 12/27/2006
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EXAMINER

THOMPSON, JAMES A

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2625

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	12/27/2006	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/820,688

Applicant(s)

NAITO ET AL.

Examiner

James A. Thompson

Art Unit

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 October 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-7,9-13,15-20 and 22-28 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-7,9-13,15-20 and 22-28 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 30 March 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- 1) ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - 2) ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - 3) ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 13 October 2006 has been entered.

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's arguments filed 13 October 2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant's discussion with respect to the differences between the cited prior art references and the present claims have been fully considered. While Ikenoue (US Patent 5,987,127) does not teach the recited storage unit, the combination of Ikenoue and Zhao (US Patent 6,243,480 B1) does teach said recited storage unit.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1-3, 5-9, 11-15, 17-22, and 24-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ikenoue (US Patent 5,987,127) in view of Zhao (US Patent 6,243,480 B1).

Regarding claims 1, 7, 13, 19, 20, 26, 27 and 28: Ikenoue discloses an image forming apparatus (figure 1 of Ikenoue) equipped with an image processing apparatus (figure 1(100); figure 13; and column 9, lines 26-28 of Ikenoue) that processed inputted first image data (column 5, lines 46-48 of Ikenoue) so as to output second image data (column 5, lines 42-46 of Ikenoue), the image forming apparatus forming an image according to the second image data (column 5, lines 49-54 of Ikenoue). The image processing apparatus (figure 13 of Ikenoue) comprises a detecting unit (figure 24(131)(portion)) and column 4, lines 23-24 of Ikenoue) that detects all pieces of additional information that are embedded in the first image

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data (column 9, lines 51-53 of Ikenoue); and an analyzing unit (figure 24(131(portion)) of Ikenoue) that analyzes the detected pieces of additional information (column 12, lines 56-61 of Ikenoue) and judges whether any of the detected pieces of additional information includes predetermined information (column 13, lines 45-50 of Ikenoue) that is updateable (column 14, lines 31-36 of Ikenoue). The detection and analysis of additional information is performed by a processor (figure 24(131) and column 13, lines 4-19 of Ikenoue). The detecting unit and the analyzing unit are the corresponding portions of said processor, along with the associated embodied software and memory, that perform the functions of the detecting unit and analyzing unit.

Ikenoue further discloses an embedding unit (figure 13(18) of Ikenoue) that (1) updates, when a judgment result of the analyzing unit is affirmative, the predetermined information included in the piece of additional information (column 16; lines 8-10, lines 21-22, and lines 25-28 of Ikenoue), and embeds the piece of additional information including the updated predetermined information into the first image data (figure 4 and column 16, lines 1-9 of Ikenoue), and (2) embeds, when the judgment result of the analyzing unit is negative, a new piece of additional information (column 16, lines 1-7 of Ikenoue) including updated information into the first image data (column 16, lines 1-9 and lines 25-28 of Ikenoue), the updated information being equivalent to the predetermined information (column 16, lines 3-9 and lines 25-28 of Ikenoue), wherein the first image data embedded with the updated predetermined information and/or the new piece of additional information is outputted as the second image data (column 14, lines 31-37 of Ikenoue). A specific format (figure 4 of Ikenoue) is used for embedding each particular type of data, said format further being divided into specific blocks for processing (column 7, lines 35-43 of Ikenoue). Therefore, the new piece of additional information is embedded at a location that does not overlap locations where the detected pieces of additional information are originally embedded (figure 4 and column 7, lines 35-43 of Ikenoue). The generation number, copy number, and apparatus recognition code are always in the same format (figure 4 of Ikenoue) whether said generation number, copy number, and apparatus recognition code are newly placed in the document or are simply updated (column 16, lines 3-9 and lines 25-28 of Ikenoue).

Ikenoue does not disclose expressly a storage unit that stores the detected pieces of additional information in association with location information thereof; that said updated predetermined information is embedded by referring to the stored location information; and that said embedding unit embeds the information at a location where said predetermined information is originally embedded.

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Zhao discloses a storage unit (figure 6(603) of Zhao) that stores pieces of additional (watermark) information in association with location information thereof (figure 8(619) and column 11, lines 49-63 of Zhao).

Zhao further discloses embedding initial predetermined information (column 11, lines 58-62 of Zhao); updating said predetermined information (column 19, lines 26-31 of Zhao); and then embedding said updated predetermined information (column 19, lines 26-30 of Zhao) at a location where the said initial predetermined information is originally embedded (figure 6(619); figure 8(619); and column 11, lines 49-53 and lines 58-62 of Zhao). As clearly shown in figures 6 and 8 of Zhao, when the watermark is embedded in the document (column 11, lines 49-53 and lines 58-62 of Zhao), the watermark is written to a predetermined location, both when said watermark is initially written and when said watermark is updated and re-embedded (column 19, lines 26-31 of Zhao).

Ikenoue and Zhao are combinable because they are from the same field of endeavor, namely the embedding and updating of digital watermarks. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to store the watermarks and use the watermark updating procedure taught by Zhao to update watermarks in the system taught by Ikenoue. Thus, the predetermined information is embedded by referring to the stored location information. The motivation for doing so would have been to allow for the tracking of potentially unauthorized, copyright infringing documents (column 19, lines 32-40 of Zhao). If the teachings of Zhao regarding the updating of watermarks are used, the level of secrecy and randomness of watermark location taught by Ikenoue is no longer required, since the tracking of unauthorized copies is a simpler matter. If the watermark is defective, the copy is unauthorized. If the watermark is missing, then the copy is also unauthorized. Thus, the concern in Ikenoue about malicious users marking out portions of a document to defeat the watermarking scheme is no longer a concern if the teachings and motivations of Zhao are applied to the teachings of Ikenoue. Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Zhao with Ikenoue to obtain the invention as specified in claims 1, 7, 13, 19, 20, 26, 27 and 28.

Further regarding claim 1: The apparatus of claim 1 is fully embodied in the apparatus of claim 7.

Further regarding claim 13: The apparatus of claim 7 performs the method recited in claim 13.

Further regarding claim 19: The apparatus of claim 7 performs the method recited in claim 19.

Further regarding claim 20: The apparatus of claim 7 executes the steps of the computer program recited in claim 20.

Further regarding claim 26: The apparatus of claim 26 is fully embodied in the apparatus of claim 1.

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Further regarding claim 27: The method of claim 27 is fully embodied in the method of claim 13.

Further regarding claim 28: The computer-readable medium containing a program of claim 28 is embodied in the computer-readable medium containing a program of claim 20.

Regarding claims 3, 9, 15 and 22: Ikenoue discloses that when the analyzing unit analyzes the detected pieces of additional information, the analyzing unit employs a predetermined embedding format used by the embedding unit (figure 4; and column 7, lines 36-49 of Ikenoue). The additional data is embedded using a predetermined format (figure 4 and column 7, lines 36-38 of Ikenoue) which can also be split into blocks of data of a predetermined size and arranged in a predetermined fashion (column 7, lines 39-45 of Ikenoue). The additional data is recovered using the same predetermined format (column 7, lines 45-49 of Ikenoue).

Regarding claims 5, 11, 17 and 24: Ikenoue discloses that, when the analyzing unit finds that any of the detected pieces of additional information is unanalyzable (column 13, lines 60-66 of Ikenoue), the analyzing unit judges that the piece of additional information does not include the predetermined information (column 14, lines 4-8 of Ikenoue). Blocks of additional data are analyzed to determine whether or not said blocks of additional data are invalid (column 13, lines 60-66 of Ikenoue). If said block of additional data are invalid, but said invalidity is not due to forgery, said invalid blocks are deleted (column 14, lines 4-8 of Ikenoue). Thus, said invalid blocks clearly do not have said predetermined information.

Regarding claims 6, 12, 18 and 25: Ikenoue discloses that the predetermined information includes information about a date when the image data is processed (column 16, lines 21-22 and lines 33-34 of Ikenoue).

5. **Claims 4, 10, 16 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ikenoue (US Patent 5,987,127) in view of Zhao (US Patent 6,243,480 B1) and Davis (US Patent 3,760,159).**

Regarding claims 4, 10, 16 and 23: Ikenoue discloses a warning unit (figure 13(20) of Ikenoue) that issues, when the additional data is determined to be secret (column 19, lines 60-65 of Ikenoue) and the proper confirmation data is not entered (column 20, lines 3-4 of Ikenoue), a warning to the effect that the copying of the document would be illegal (column 20, lines 5-9 of Ikenoue).

Ikenoue further discloses using the analyzing unit to find if any of the detected pieces of additional information are unanalyzable (column 13, lines 60-66 of Ikenoue).

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Ikenoue in view of Zhao does not disclose expressly that said warning unit issues, when the analyzing unit finds that any of the detected pieces of additional data is unanalyzable, a warning to the effect that the piece of additional information is unanalyzable.

Davis discloses issuing a warning to the effect that a valid parity does not exist (column 6, lines 16-20 of Davis) in the digital input data (column 5, lines 64-68 of Davis).

Ikenoue in view of Zhao is combinable with Davis because they are from similar problem solving areas, namely the verification of digital information. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to display a warning if the digital data cannot be read properly, as taught by Davis, and is therefore unanalyzable, as taught by Ikenoue. The motivation for doing so would have been to give the operator a visual notification that an error has occurred (column 6, lines 19-20 of Davis). Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Davis with Ikenoue in view of Zhao to obtain the invention as specified in claims 4, 10, 16 and 23.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to James A. Thompson whose telephone number is 571-272-7441. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30AM-5:00PM.

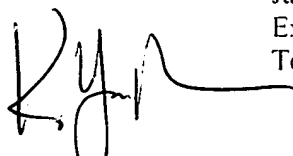
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David K. Moore can be reached on 571-272-7437. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



19 December 2006

James A. Thompson
Examiner
Technology Division 2625



KING Y. POON
PRIMARY EXAMINER